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AUTHOR Hinds, Diane; Sprague, Caroline
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ABSTRACT

The Citrus College faculty and staff addressed the problem of lower career aspirations among women by establishing a support group, Citrus Women in Higher Education (CWHE). In addition to group meetings and special programs of interest, the CWHE has developed a mentor program to address the problem of blocked careers faced by women. The goals of the program are met through a one-on-one mentoring/shadowing situation that encourages the student to become involved in a leadership situation with a Citrus College administrator or other personnel. The interaction includes the active involvement of students in campus projects, such as accreditation and workshops; the introduction of students to professionals; joint participation in professional conferences and workshops; and a journal of daily activities and involvement. Full-time students with the requisite grades and ability to make the needed time commitments are encouraged to apply for the program. The student's mentor is selected according to professional expertise, student choice, mentor suggestion, and suggestions of an interview committee. Mentors and mentees develop an individualized program to meet specific needs, and work together 15 hours per week in decision-making, crisis management, and problem-solving situations. Students have shown extraordinary growth over the period of the mentor program. Enrollment information on male and female students is appended. (AYC)

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Citrus Community College District Mentor Program

by

Diane Hinds
Director of Child Development Center

and

Caroline Sprague
Director of Personnel

Citrus Community College District
Glendora, California

Presented at the 11th Annual Conference of the
Association of California Community College Administrators
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CITRUS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
MENTOR PROGRAM

Presented at the Eleventh Annual ACCCA Conference February 27, 1986, by Diane Hinds, Director of Child Development Center and Caroline Sprague, Director of Personnel.

ORIGIN

Culture affects the development of the female. Parents and adults begin in infancy to treat girls differently than boys, in part because they perceive them differently. Adults perceive male infants as being stronger - studies have shown that when male children are in danger of falling, the parent offers verbal assistance; however, when a female child starts to fall, physical assistance is given. Another study found that elementary school teachers are more likely to assist a female child who is struggling than a male child with a similar problem. Girls receive dolls and "Susy homemaker" kits and boys receive wagons trucks for Christmas. Many such attentions, or lack thereof, have been documented and the effect is cumulative and substantial. It affects women when they decide to continue their education and it also affects the way they compete in the world of work.

Community colleges have actively recruited women and other minority students. As a direct consequence of the policy of expanded access, the community college student population has changed over the last few years, resulting in an increased need and demand for support services including child development centers. The current student population includes a higher proportion of mature women. At Citrus College, as at other colleges throughout the state, women students now outnumber male students. These women are likely to be employed, attend school part-time and have primary child-rearing responsibilities.

Returning to school is not easy for many women, and if there are young children, the logistics alone can be overwhelming. Locating affordable, dependable, acceptable child care that is reasonably close to school or home and is available the hours needed is almost impossible if the student's income is limited.

In spite of these constraints, many women do enroll in school and then face their personal concerns about their ability to be successful in the academic environment and in their chosen career. Elaine El-Khauas states in her article "Differences in Academic Development During College," that "women students often suffer a decline in academic and career ambition during their college years" due in part to a lack of confidence about their likelihood for success.

Since we do provide child care at Citrus College, we have done some simple comparisons of how this population does in relationship to the total campus. We have found that parents from our child development center are more highly represented among graduating students and among students receiving scholastic awards.

Our observations indicate these students do well because:

1. They are more mature;

2. They see a need for improving their circumstances and have chosen education as the mechanism. This results in a strong commitment;

3. They are provided a support system including not only child care but also caring adults and a viable referral program that encourages continued enrollment in school;

4. They are provided professional role models;

5. They are encouraged to participate in support groups, including Citrus Women In Higher Education;

6. They are encouraged to participate in the Mentor Program, both formally and informally through development of a mentor.

However, at the community college level, women students are still "treated differently" partly because they are still viewed differently by tradtional members of our culture, partly because they perceive themselves as different and perhaps less capable in some areas such as mathematics and science, and partly because they <u>are</u> different. Our culture has encouraged the development of some aspects of women's collective personalities and discouraged other aspects so the "typical" women often is less aggressive, less assertive and less competitive. These differences can lead to lowered career aspirations.

The Citrus College faculty and staff addressed this problem in 1977 by establishing a support group, Citrus Women In Higher Education. This group meets formally four times a year and informally six to eight times per year. Citrus Women in Higher Education also sponsors special programs of interest to all students, faculty and staff.

Citrus Women In Higher Education encourages students to participate in its meetings and programs. Through this enthusiastic participation, women returning to college face up to their frustrations, fears and anxieties. Some of those

frustrations, fears and anxieties that have been shared with us are:

1. Preparing to take the first step to return to school;
2. Walking into a crowded registration area, and trying to follow directions;
3. Completing forms;
4. Deciding what classes to take;
5. Adjusting to the first day, week, semester in a new environment--sometimes participating in a class with students 10 to 20 years younger;
6. Integrating, school and homework into the family life--around being wife, mother and homemaker;
7. Obtaining support from spouse and children;
8. Being accepted by peers;
9. Realization of being an individual person--achieving self respect as a person;
10. Working to have family, friends and peers recognize and accept new-found self respect;
11. Working to continue educational and career goals;
12. Requesting support to achieve educational and career goals.

The Mentor Program we are sharing with you today is a project developed by Citrus Women In Higher Education in order to more adequately address the problem of blocked careers faced by many women.

Members of the Citrus Women in Higher Education Organization were aware of the mentoring of male students who went on to become regular employees of the college or moved quickly into the mainstream of the business world. Several of the male student body presidents became administrators at Citrus College, yet there was no history of the same progress for female student body presidents. Because the college had applied for but been denied federal funding for a mentor program in the past, Citrus Women In Higher Education applied to the President/Superintendent for funds for the program. We were fortunate the President/Superintendent did support a mentor program and funds were put into the budget to begin the program.

The value of mentors is recognized nationwide. Hardly a month goes by without at least one major periodical publishing an article about the assets of finding a mentor, or how to take best advantage of a mentor. The informed mentor is definitely "in" and works well.

Agnes Missirian of Babson College in Massachusetts conducted interviews with 100 of America's leading corporate women and concludes that all had mentors.

The Citrus College Mentor Program is significantlly different from other formalized mentor programs and this difference is in the extent of the comprehensiveness. Educational research indicates that skill development is learned through participation and experiences and we have provided participatory leadership experiences for the student by having the student work closely with the mentor on a daily basis.

This intensive model is seldom replicated outside the work place, and not always there. The daily contact generates a close relationship between mentor and mentee, imperative for the optimum mentor/mentee experience.

The close relationship developed between mentor and mentee in the workplace is often positive and growth-producing in the early stages but can become difficult as the mentee developes expertise and confidence. In our program the intense relationship is promoted but all concerned are aware of the change that will occur at the end of the program. This structure seems to encourage a transition from mentor/mentee to supportive friend.

THE PROGRAM

The goals of the program are met primarily through a one-on-one mentor/shadowing situation that encourages the student to become involved in a leadership situation with a Citrus College administrator or other professional. This interaction includes:

1. Active involvement of students in campus projects such as accreditation, workshops, conferences;

2. Introduction of students to professionals both on and off campus;

3. Joint participation in professional conferences and workshops;

4. On-going discussions and analysis of the student's involvement;

5. A journal of daily activities and involvement.

The student's mentor is selected according to professional expertise, student selection, mentor suggestion and the suggestions of the interview committee. The professional area of interest and possible mentors are discussed fully at the time of the interview and followed up by the committee members after the final selection of the student participants. The final assignment is made by the committee members.

Each mentor/mentee develops an individualized program to meet specific needs; however, much that occurs for the students is similar in terms of personal growth, so we have develped monthly meetings where the students are able to share concerns, difficulties, successes and resources. These meetings are an important part of the total project because they become an additional network--expanding the current and future professional resources of the student participants.

The student participant works with the mentor 15 hours per week, not as a clerk, but works along side the mentor. If the mentor schedules a meeting with staff, the student is there throughout the meeting. The student is involved in the decision-making process of the mentor, not in the decision itself but the process that occurs. Through the shadowing, the participant is able to glean the special effects required in performing the daily administrative chores...greeting the president, and collaborating with fellow administrators. We expect our mentees to be exposed to managing crisis, to observe decisions in the making, and to observe how those decisions are implemented. Mentoring can be a contagious lifestyle for a positive link to ethical behavior. It can be a nurturing of the ability to reason and think critically...encouraging the process by which managers search for moral solutions. We want to strengthen the abilities of the mentees to interpret and evaluate decisions that are morally right...adopting principles to be able to cope, to turn the unavailable into a challenge, to be at ease with the decision-making process.

Students are also provided with suggested reading lists that relate to every aspect of the career, from "Change Masters" by Rosabeth Kantor and "Dress for Success" by John T. Mollor to professional journals and materials.

Students are provided and assisted in utilizing fully all of the resources available on our campus. They use the Career Center, talk informally or formally with counselors, utilize the Library, the Data processing center, and the Cosmetology Department. Students are encouraged to look, act and talk as professionals within their fields.

The students have shown extraordinary growth over the period of the mentor program. We are most anxious to track them for 5-6 years to see if their careers reflect the expertise and leadership ability that we have seen develop.

CRITERIA FOR THE PROGRAM

We decided that participation in the Mentor Program should be relatively open. We wanted to include all students who would benefit from participation. We do require that:

1. The student be a full-time student enrolled in 10 or more units;

2. The student be able to devote 12-15 hours per week to the mentor project;

3. The student be available for two semesters in the mentor program;

4. The student have a "C" average or above in the past year;

5. The student have the abililty to follow through on the application process.

Posters, flyers and bulletin announcements are displayed on campus in the spring promoting applications for the fall semester. The entire application process has a total point value of 100 points. Student applicants receiving the most points are awared the opportunity to participate in the Mentor Program.

Students begin the application process by obtaining an application and instructions from our Personnel Office. The completed application includes:

1. a copy of college transcripts;

2. two letters of recommendation;

3. a one-page essay titled "My Career Goals."

Each of these items is valued at 25 points. The students also submit a one-page application with personal information such as name, address and phone number. The application page has no point value.

All student applicants who achieve 64 or more points on the initial application participate in the interview process. Students with less than 64 points on their application are individually counseled about the application process and encouraged to apply again at a future date. They are often also referred to the Counseling Department or to the Career Center for information or testing.

The interview, which is conducted by a panel of three campus professionals, also has a 25 point value.

Recognizing that the Mentor Program was needed, we were concerned about the time commitment that would be required. Our returning students are mature women with family responsibilities. They could not devote the required number of hours without pay and we wanted to validate the experience and felt money was the appropriate way to validate this particular experience. The mentee works wih a professional for a year, and receives a stipend.

One of the students selected to participate in this year's mentor program wrote in her application essay, "When I first returned to college my career goals were quite simple. I hoped to make as much money as possible, as soon as possible. However, a funny thing happened to me on the way to my degree: I received an education. It is this education that has led me to re-evaluated my life goals and career programs."

This is exactly what we are striving to make possible for more of our women students!

MENTORS

The Mentor Program has been successful for a variety of people with a multitude of different backgrounds. Specifically:

Sharry - A high school Child Care Regional Occupational Program student on campus, attended school part time off-and on. Once she was in our Mentor Program, she began participating in professional organizations related to her career goal, worked closely with an on-campus mentor, increased her units per semester, and her career took off. She is now an excellent full-time preschool teacher and has transferred to a four-year college where she is completing her senior year.

Nancy - A college student without direction. She had completed numerous courses but wasn't sure what she would do with her life. But she liked kids. After working with a mentor for a year, she had identified an interest in special education. She completed her Associate of Arts degree, transferred to a four-year school and was hired by a local private school. When she graduated with her master's degre from University of California, Davis, she had several years of solid work experience and a network of professional contacts that made placement a breeze.

Rose - Another student with no idea of where she wanted to go, career-wise. She was also shy and had some difficulty

in utilizing the resources available to her. After one year in the Mentor Program, she had identified personnel administration as a career goal and is now enrolled at California State University, Northridge, in pursuit of her goal.

Penny - A self-effacing person with very limited ideas about the career possibilities open to her. She had a tendency to put herself down, but she was tremendously excited about her classes. "There is so much to learn, I just love it", she kept saying. After just one semester in the Mentor Program, she has become more confident about herself and her abilities. She has decided that she will be a librarian. And so on.....

Mentor fantasy has a special poignancy for young women starting back to school to pursue careers. They are likely to feel like outsiders in a predominately male world, and they may bring with them certain learned patterns of dependence and insecurity. At a very early age we dream of being "made something of" by a powerful and imaginative adult, the fantasy of the fairy godmother...the mentor who will magically open all the doors. We believe our Mentor Program at Citrus College offers this "dreamed of" fantasy to women returning to school. We don't believe mentors should be for just a fortunate few, but should be there for all who need and desire that early security to develop confidence on the path to success. In the Wizard of Oz, it was the Scarecrow's encouragement that gave Dorothy the confidence she needed to continue down the yellow brick road to achieve her goal. Today's media message conveys that the world is made up of winners and losers--and that you fail if you are not number one.

With the declining birth rate and the increasing needs of our society, we can no longer afford to ignore the contributions that educated, committed women will make. There is no margin for error. We want to help reduce the number of educational failures.

THE FUTURE

Since funding in the community colleges is limited, Citrus College also looks to the community for support of its program. The local Business and Professional Women's Organization in Glendora has been very supportive of our program. Through the college's membership in the organization, we are able to place several of our students with mentors in the private sector. Mentors who will participate include attorneys, a chamber of commerce director, consultants and entrepreneurs. It is our goal to expand mentorships throughout the five communities

within our district. Off-campus mentors provide students career opportunities that are expanded beyond the educational system.

Proud of its innovative programs for the community, Citrus College will strive to continue to offer programs that are meaningful to the students. We see a real future in the Mentor Program with the state-supported GAIN program, Greater Avenues for Independence. Los Angeles County is presently attempting to develop the mechanism where GAIN participants can enroll in a a Mentor Program as part of the program's contract.

With continued support from the administration and expansion throughout the community, our Mentor Program will continue to grow. The need is there!

APPENDIX A

CHART

1.) - 1A.) Enrollment of females in higher education and at Citrus College exceeds the enrollment of men. Unfortunately, this representation is not reflected in the professional world. Something is happening to our women students on the way to their careers.

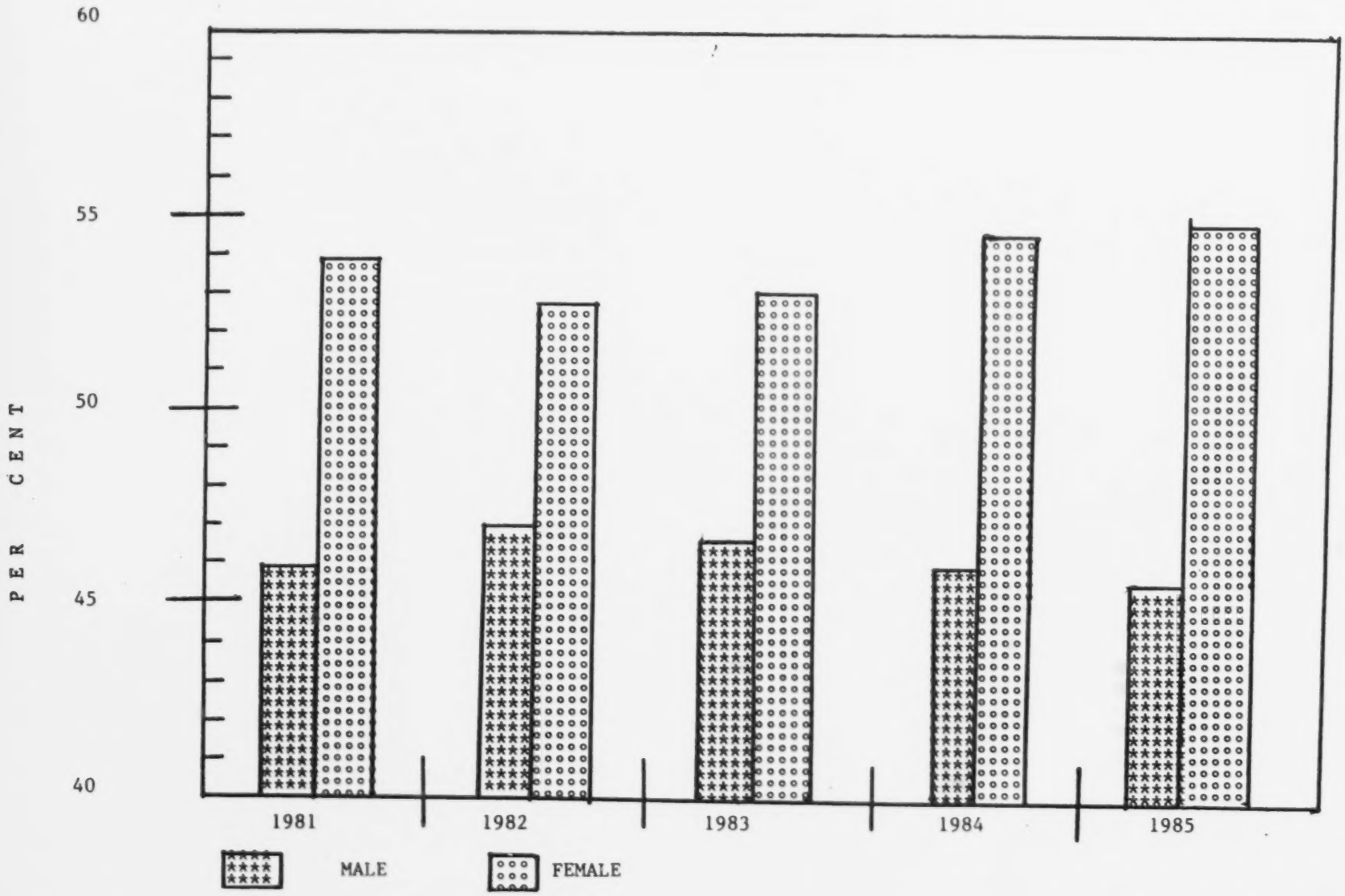
2.) The increasing maturity of our students, I think, is reflected in this chart. The returning student is more likely to have a career goal in mind, so the number of undecided students continues to fall, from 30% to 23% since 1979.

3.) This chart depicts some of the problems we are attempting to address through the mentor program. Keeping in mind that we enroll more women then men - it's disturbing to see how quickly they begin to fall behind in the career ladder once they leave the academic environment.

After two years of college work there are major differences:

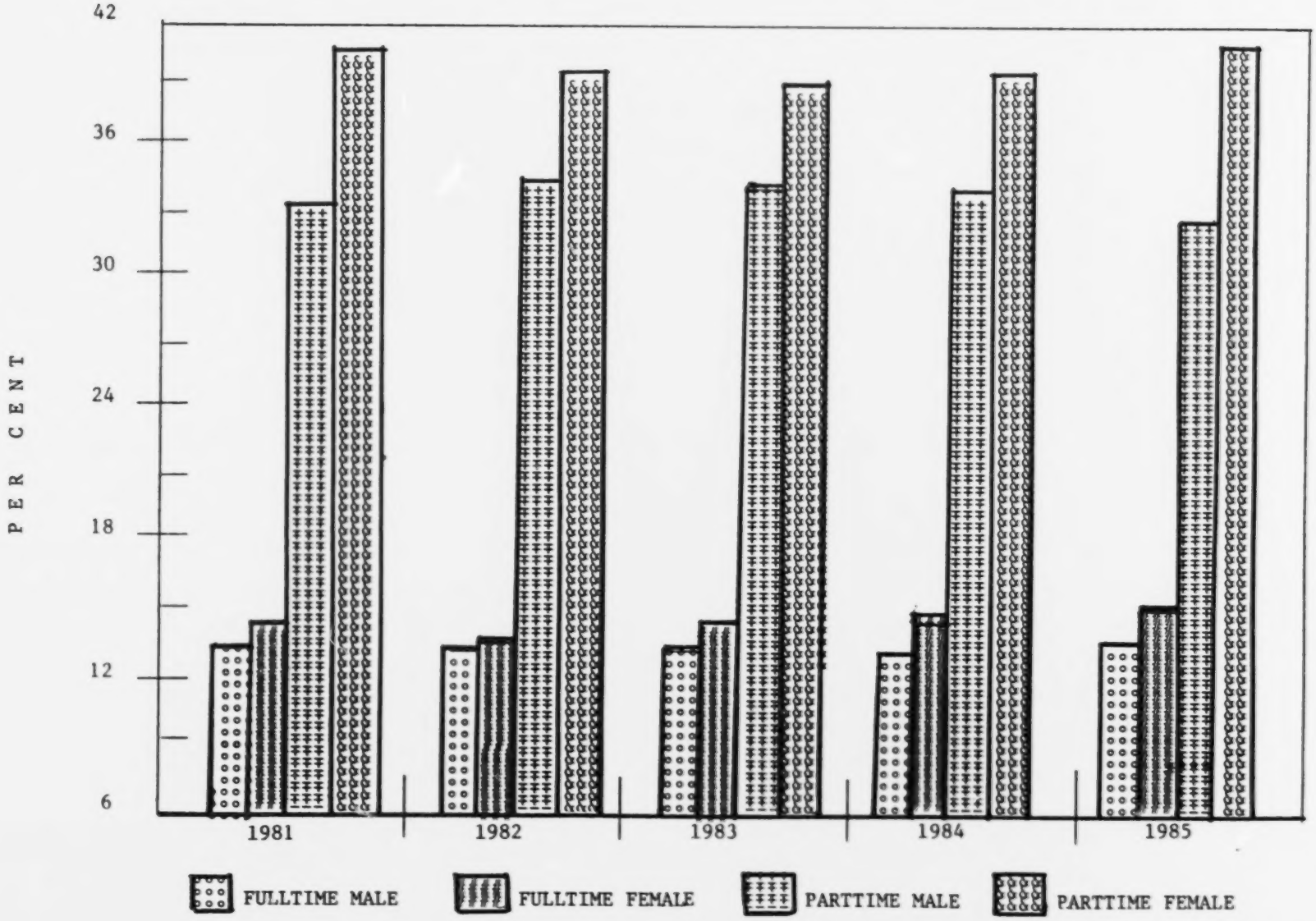
a.) Men and women both show a dramatic shift from Associate of Arts (AA) to Associate of Science (AS) degrees. However, women continue to pursue the AA in larger numbers than men.

The emphasis on the AA and the relatively limited number of females graduating with AS is reflected in careers selected and opportunities available.

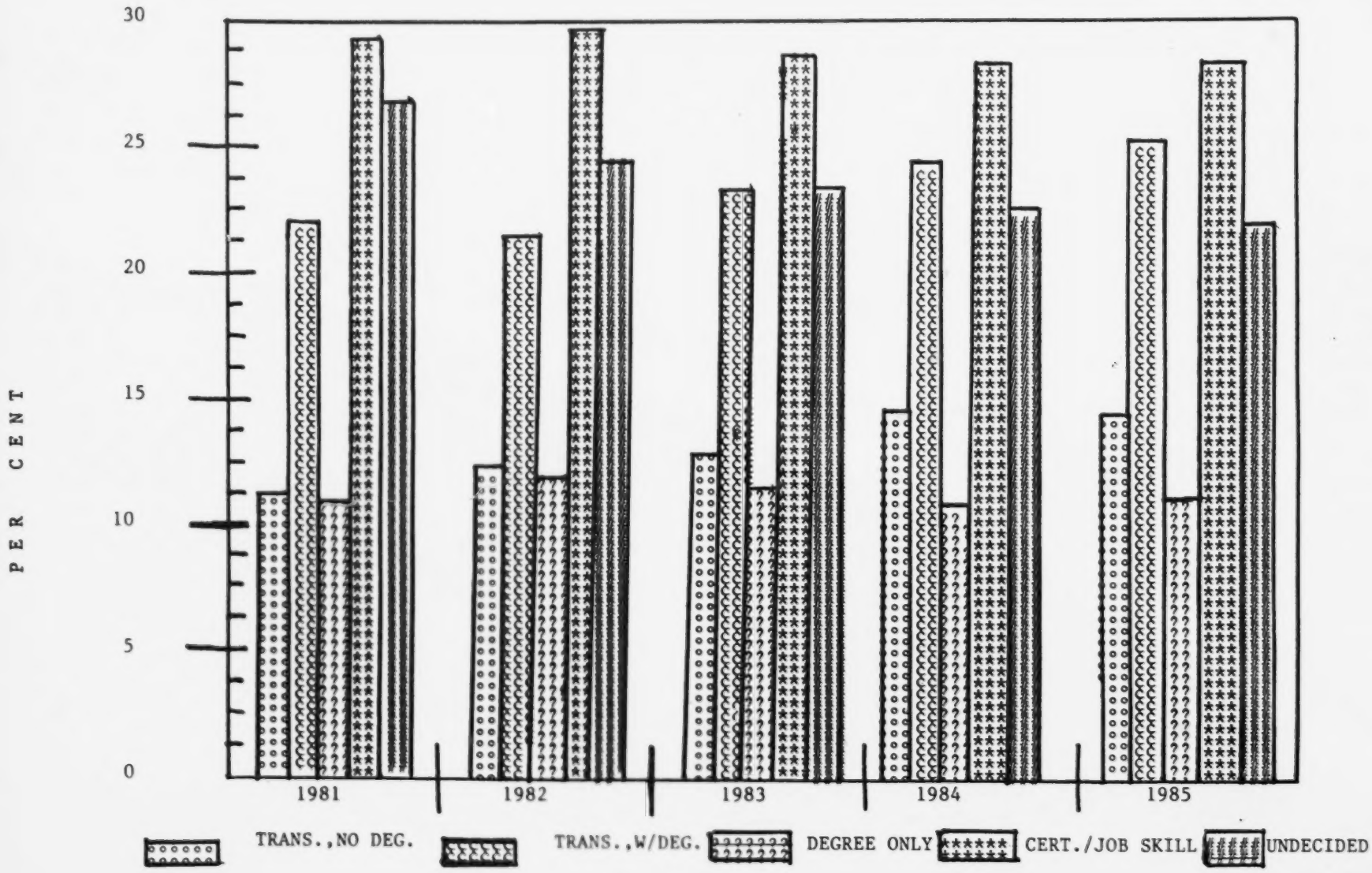

CITRUS STUDENTS BY GENDER
60
55
50
45
40
PER CENT
1981
1982
1983
1984
1985
MALE
FEMALE

(1)

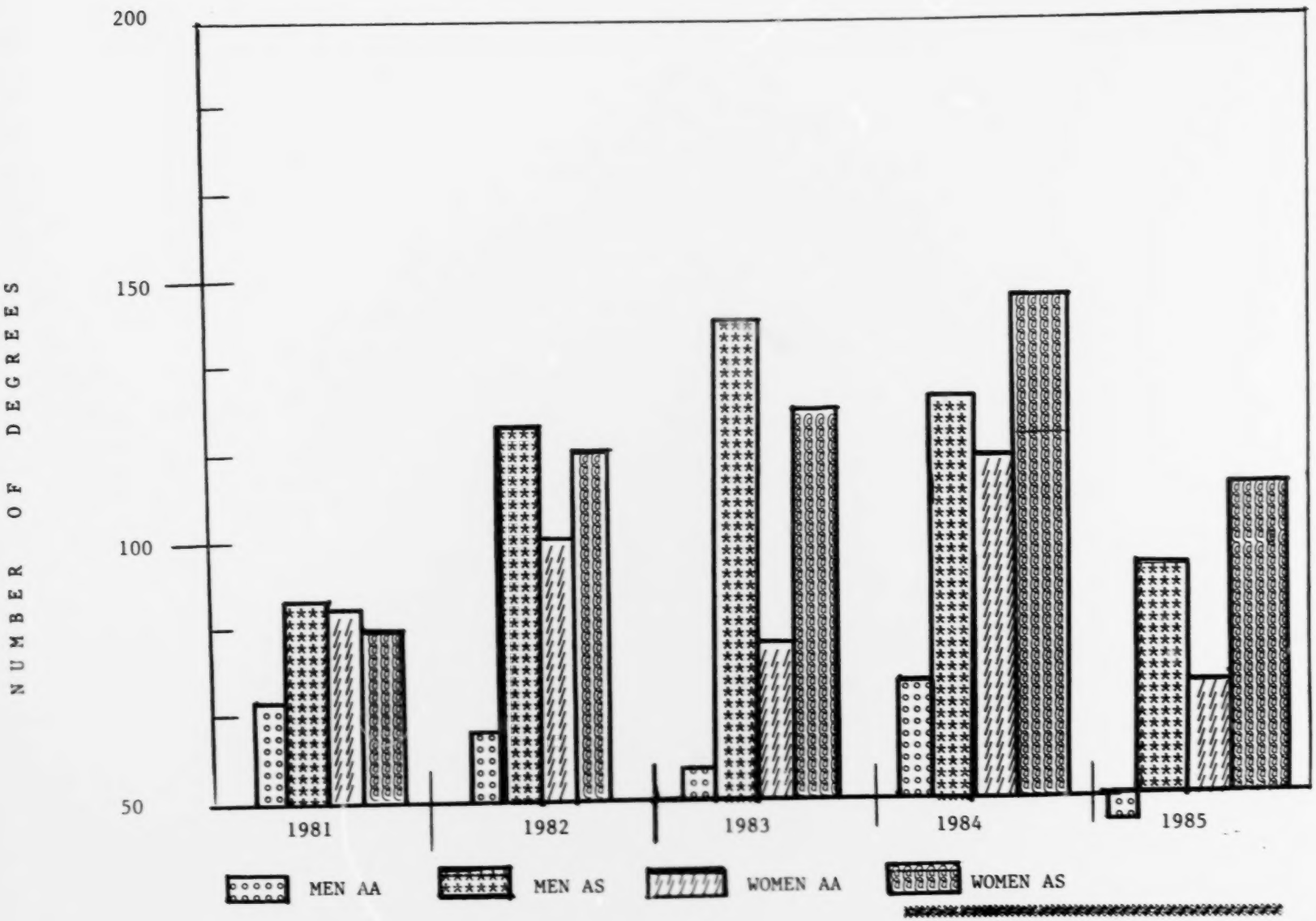
CITRUS ATTENDANCE 1981-1985



CITRUS STUDENT GOALS 1981-1985



CITRUS DEGREES AWARDED 1981 - 1985



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